1. What is Islaam?

The word "Islaam" is an Arabic word that means "submitting and surrendering your will to Almighty God". The word comes from the same root as the Arabic word "salam", which means peace. Unlike the names used for other religions, such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, the name for the religion of Islaam was both revealed by God and carries a deep spiritual meaning - only by submitting one's will to Almighty God can one obtain true peace both in this life and in the life of the hereafter. Islaam teaches that today's religions originally had the same essential message - which was to submit whole-heartedly to the will of God and to worship Him and Him alone. For this reason, Islaam is not a new religion but is the same divinely revealed Ultimate Truth that God revealed to all prophets, including Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus.

2. Who are the Muslims?

The Arabic word "Muslim" literally means "someone who sincerely submits to the will of God". The message of Islaam is meant for the entire world and anyone who accepts this message internally and externally becomes a Muslim. Some people mistakenly believe that Islaam is just a religion for Arabs, but nothing could be further from the truth, since in actuality over 80% of the world's Muslims are not Arabs! Even though most Arabs are Muslims, there are Arabs who are Christians, Jews and atheists. If one just takes a look at the various peoples who live in the Muslim World - from Nigeria to Bosnia and from Morocco to Indonesia - it is easy enough to see that Muslims come from all different races, ethnic groups and nationalities. From the very beginning, Islaam had a universal message for all people. This can be seen in the fact that some of the early companions of the Prophet Muhammad were not only Arabs, but also Persians, Africans and Romans. Being a Muslim entails complete acceptance and active obedience to the revealed will of Almighty God. A Muslim is a person who freely accepts to base his beliefs, values and faith on the will of Almighty God. In the past, even though you don't see it as much today, the word "Mohammedans" was often used as a label for Muslims. This label is a misnomer and is the result of either wilful distortion or sheer ignorance. One of the reasons for the misconception is that Europeans were taught for centuries that Muslims worshipped the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and all the Prophets) in the same way that Christians worship Jesus. This is absolutely not true since a Muslim is not permitted to worship anyone or anything besides Almighty God.

3. Who is Allaah?

Very often one will here the Arabic word "Allaah" being used in regards to Islaam. The word "Allaah" is simply the Arabic word for Almighty God, the One worthy of all worship without partners, and is the same word used by Arabic speaking Christians and Jews. If one were to pick up an Arabic translation of the Bible, one would see the word "Allaah" being used where the word "God" is used in English. Actually, the Arabic word for Almighty God, "Allaah", is quite similar to the word for God in other Semitic languages - for example, the Hebrew word for God is "Elah". For various reasons, some non-Muslims mistakenly believe that Muslims worship a different God than Prophets such as Moses and Jesus worshipped. This is certainly not the case, since the Pure Monotheism of Islaam calls all people to the worship of the God of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and all of the other prophets. True Muslims believe that Jews and Christians have differed from the way of the Prophets and have associated partners in worship with Allaah, whether it be Prophets, Angels or Saints.

4. Who is Muhammad?

The last and final prophet that the One True God sent to humanity was the Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad explained, interpreted and lived the teachings of Islaam the same as all the previous Prophets. Even though other religious communities claimed to believe in One God, over time they had corrupted their beliefs by taking their prophets and saints as intercessors with Almighty God. Some religions believe their prophets to be manifestations of God, "God Incarnate" or the "Son of God". All of these false ideas lead to the creation being worshipped instead of the Creator, which contributed to the idolatrous practice of believing that Almighty God can be approached through intermediaries. In order to guard against these falsehoods, the Prophet Muhammad always emphasised that he was only a human-being tasked with the preaching of God's message. He taught Muslims to refer to him as "the Messenger of God and His Slave". To Muslims, Muhammad is the supreme example for all people - he was the exemplary prophet, true worshipper, military leader, ruler, teacher, neighbour, husband, father and friend. Unlike other prophets and messengers, the Prophet Muhammad lived in the full light of history. Muslims don't need to have mere "faith" that he existed and that his teachings are preserved - they know it to be a fact! Even when his followers only numbered a few dozen, Almighty God informed Muhammad that he had been sent as a mercy, to all of mankind. Because people had distorted or forgotten God's messages, God took it upon Himself to protect the message revealed to Muhammad. This was because Almighty God promised not to send another messenger after him. Since all of God's messengers have preached the message of Islaam - i.e. submission to the will of God and the worship of God alone - Muhammad is actually the last prophet of Islaam, not the first!

5. What are the Teachings of Islaam?

The foundation of the Islaamic faith is belief in the Unity of God. This means to believe that there is only one Creator and Sustainer of everything in the Universe, and that nothing is divine or worthy of being worshipped except for Him. Truly believing in the Unity of God means much more than simply believing that there is "One God" - as opposed to two, three or four. There are a number of religions that claim belief in "One God" and believe that ultimately there is only one Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. Islaam, however, not only insists on this, but also rejects using such words as "Lord" and "Saviour" for anyone besides Almighty God. Islaam also rejects the use of all intermediaries between God and Man, and insists that people approach God directly and reserve all worship for Him alone. Muslims believe that Almighty God is Compassionate, Loving and Merciful.

The essence of falsehood is the claim that God cannot deal with and forgive His creatures directly. By over-emphasising the burden of sin, as well as claiming that God cannot forgive you directly, false religions seek to get people to despair of the Mercy of God. Once they are convinced that they cannot approach God directly, people can be mislead into turning to false gods for help. These "false gods" can take various forms, such as saints, angels, or someone who is believed to be the "Son of God" or "God Incarnate". In almost all cases, people who worship, pray to or seek help from a false god don't consider it to be, or call it, a "god". They claim belief in One Supreme God, but claim that they pray to and worship others beside God only to get closer to Him. In Islaam, there is a clear distinction between the Creator and the created. There is no ambiguity in divinity - anything that is created is not deserving of worship and only the Creator is worthy of being worshipped. Some religions falsely believe that God has become part of His creation and is therefore one with His creation, and this has led people to believe that they can worship something created in order to reach their Creator. Rather God (Allaah) is the Most High distinct from His Creation. Muslims believe that even though God is Unique and beyond comprehension - He has no "Son", partners or associates. According to Muslim belief, Almighty God "does not beget nor was He begotten" - neither literally, allegorically, metaphorically, physically or metaphysically - He is Absolutely Unique and Eternal. He is in control of everything and is perfectly capable of bestowing His infinite Mercy and Forgiveness to whomever He chooses. That is why He is called the All-Powerful and Most Merciful. Almighty God has created the Universe for mankind, and as such wants the best for all human beings. Muslims see everything in the Universe as a sign of the Creatorship and Benevolence of Almighty God. Also, the belief in the Unity of God is not merely a metaphysical concept. It is a dynamic belief that affects ones view of humanity, society and all aspects of life. As a logical outcome to the Islaamic belief in the Oneness of God, is its belief in the oneness of mankind and humanity.

6. What is the Qur'aan?

It is the final revelation of the will of Almighty God to all of mankind which was conveyed through the Angel Gabriel, in Arabic, to the Prophet Muhammad in its sounds, words and meanings. The Qur'aan, sometimes spelled Koran, was relayed to the Prophet's companions, who memorised it word for word,

and which has been publicly and continually recited by them and their successors until the present day. In short, the Qur'aan is the book of guidance from God par excellence. The Qur'aan is still memorised and taught by millions of people. The language of the Qur'aan, Arabic, is still a living language to millions of people, so unlike the scriptures of other religions, the Qur'aan is still read in its original language by countless millions of people. The Qu'raan is a living miracle in the Arabic language; and is known to be incomparable in its style, form and spiritual impact. God's final revelation to mankind, the Qur'aan was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad over a period of 23 years. The Qur'aan in contrast to many other religious books, was always thought to be the Word of God by those who believed in it, (i.e. it wasn't something decreed by a religious council many years after being written). Also, the Qu'raan was recited publicly in front of both the Muslim and non-Muslim communities during the life of the Prophet Muhammad. The entire Qur'aan was also completely written down during the lifetime of the Prophet, and numerous companions of the Prophet memorised the entire Qur'aan word-for-word as it was revealed. So unlike other scriptures, the Qur'aan was always in the hands of the common believers, it was always thought to be God's word and due to wide-spread memorisation, it was perfectly preserved. In regards to the teachings of the Qur'aan - it is a universal scripture, and it is addressed to all of mankind, and not to a particular tribe or "chosen people". The message that it brings is nothing new, but the same message of all of the prophets - submit to Almighty God and worship Him alone. As such, God's revelation in the Qur'aan focuses on teaching human beings the importance of believing in the Unity of God and framing their lives around the guidance which He has sent. Additionally, the Qur'aan contains the stories of the previous prophets, such as Abraham, Noah, Moses and Jesus; as well as many commands and prohibitions from God. In modern times in which so many people are caught up in doubt, spiritual despair and "political correctness", the Qur'aanic teachings offer solutions to the emptiness of our lives and the turmoil that is gripping the world today.

7. *How Do Muslims View the Nature of Man, the Purpose of Life and the Life Hereafter?*

In the Majestic Qur'aan, God teaches human beings that they were created in order to worship Him, and that the basis of all true worship is God-consciousness. Since the teachings of Islaam encompass all aspects of life and ethics, God-consciousness is encouraged in all human affairs. Islaam makes it clear that all human acts are acts of worship if they are done for God alone and in accordance to His Divine Law. As such, worship in Islaam is not limited to religious rituals. The teachings of Islaam act as a mercy and a healing for the human soul, and such qualities as humility, sincerity, patience and charity are strongly encouraged. Additionally, Islaam condemns pride and self-righteousness, since Almighty God is the only judge of human righteousness. The Islaamic view of the nature of man is also realistic and well-balanced. Human beings are not believed to be inherently sinful, but are seen as equally capable of both good and evil. Islaam also teaches that faith and action go hand-in-hand. God has given people freewill, and the measure of one's faith is one's deeds and actions. However, human beings have also been created weak and regularly fall into sin. This is the nature of the human being as created by God in His Wisdom, and it is not inherently "corrupt" or in need of repair. This is because the avenues of repentance are always open to all human beings, and Almighty God loves the repentant sinner more than one who does not sin at all. The true balance of an Islaamic life is established by having a healthy fear of God as well as a sincere belief in His infinite Mercy. A life without fear of God leads to sin and disobedience, while believing that we have sinned so much that God will not possibly forgive us only leads to despair. In light of this, Islaam teaches that: only the misguided despair of the Mercy of their Lord. Additionally, the Noble Qur'aan, which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, contains a great deal of teachings about the life hereafter and the Day of Judgement. Due to this, Muslims believe that all human beings will ultimately be judged by God for their beliefs and actions in their earthly lives. In judging human beings, Almighty God will be both Merciful and Just, and people will only be judged for what they were capable of. Suffice it to say that Islaam teaches that life is a test, and that all human beings will be accountable before God. A sincere belief in the life Hereafter is key to leading a well-balanced moral life. Otherwise, life is viewed as an end in itself, which causes human beings to become more selfish, materialistic and immoral...

We invite you to become a Muslim today. To testify your belief in Islaam, state the following:

Ashadu an laa ilaha illallaah wa Ashadu ana Muhammadur-Rasoolullaah (I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allaah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah).

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7 'Fundamental' Questions on Islaam



"And Indeed it has been revealed to you (O Muhammad) **as it was to those** (Allaah's Messengers) **before you: 'If you join others in Worship with Allaah,** (then) **surely,** (all) **your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers.' Nay! But worship Allaah** (Alone and none else)**, and be among the grateful."** (The Noble Qur'aan, 39:65-66)

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